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A Reassuring Report

One of the most important reports of the year was made in the U.S. Senate last Friday.

On that day, Senator John Stennis of Mississippi, chairman of the Preparedness Investigating Subcommittee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, told the Senate of the progress being made in implementing the four "safeguards" which the Senate insisted upon before approving the nuclear test ban treaty a year ago. This is the treaty that bans nuclear testing in the atmosphere or the sea, but permits underground testing.

If the report had been made by a leftist such as Republican Jacob Javits of New York or Democrat William Fulbright of Arkansas, it would have smacked of a white-wash. For these men have long urged closer economic and military ties with the Soviet Union. Their judgments as to whether the safeguards were being carried out could be expected to be affected by their attitudes that such safeguards are not as necessary as they are deemed to be by Stennis and other members of his subcommittee.

Stennis, however, is a Southern conservative, and, though a Democrat, is no apologist for the State Department or the Johnson Administration. He views the Communist menace for what it is—a conspiracy to defeat the United States from within and without. When he says a thorough investigation was made, you can be sure that it was thorough, and that his report does not gloss over any deficiencies.

This being so, his report was all the more reassuring and encouraging. Briefly, he stated that all four safeguards imposed by the Senate—at the insistence of the Joint Chiefs of Staff—are being carried out. He

The four safeguards would, if carried out, at least keep the U.S. abreast of the Soviet Union in the development of nuclear weapons which can be tested underground.

These safeguards, which the Kennedy Administration agreed to carry out, consist of:

1—The conduct of comprehensive, aggressive, and continuing underground nuclear test programs designed to add to our knowledge and improve our weapons in all areas of significance to our military posture for the future.

2—The maintenance of modern nuclear laboratory facilities and programs in theoretical and exploratory nuclear technology which will attract, retain, and insure the continued application of our human scientific resources to these programs on which continued progress in nuclear technology depends.

3—The maintenance of the facilities and resources necessary to institute promptly, nuclear tests in the atmosphere should they be deemed essential to our national security or should the treaty or any of its terms be abrogated by the Soviet Union.

4—The improvement of our capability, within feasible and practical limits, to monitor compliance with the terms of the treaty, to detect violations and to maintain our knowledge of Sino-Soviet nuclear activities, capabilities, and achievements.

None of these safeguards will improve the U.S. position in the one field where the Soviet Union is considered to have the advantage—the development of multi-megaton bombs. The development of such bombs requires testing in the atmosphere or in the sea. The treaty, therefore, protests the Soviet advantage in this field by banning tests in both the atmosphere and the

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sea. The Russians, however, can continue the race to develop tactical nuclear weapons, which can be tested underground—the one field in which the U.S. is considered to be ahead. Under the terms of the treaty, then, the U.S. takes all the risks and the Soviets none. As originally proposed, the treaty contained none of the safeguards which the Joint Chiefs insisted upon, and would have placed the U.S. at an even more serious disadvantage.

Stennis' subcommittee made what he called an "extensive review" of the safeguards program during the first year of the treaty. The investigation was conducted on the site of laboratories and testing grounds, and included meetings, briefings and discussions with officials of the Department of Defense, the Atomic Energy Commission, the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, the Central Intelligence Agency, and of the nuclear laboratories.

Stennis said that one of the most encouraging aspects of the review "was the expression by many of these officials of deep gratification that the Senate had established safeguards and was maintaining a continuing interest in seeing that they are implemented adequately."

"By and large," he reported, "although a few soft spots are evident, the safeguards implemen-

tation program carried out in fiscal year 1964 and planned for fiscal year 1965 appears to be extensive, vigorous and effective."

He praised the "fine, large and imaginative laboratory research program" and said that it has added significantly to the nation's nuclear weapons knowledge. Plans for resumption of nuclear testing in the atmosphere, were found to be "satisfactory and adequate." U. S. capability to monitor compliance with the treaty and to detect violations "have been improved," he said, and surveillance has been increased to carry out the fourth safeguard.

The soft spots were found in the underground nuclear testing designed to obtain additional information on nuclear weapons effects. These soft spots have been identified, he said, and "corrective action" has been taken by responsible officials.

We have no doubt but that a large part of the success of the safeguards program can be traced directly to the surveillance of the Senate subcommittee. We wish there were similar safeguards and a similar subcommittee to protect our Constitutional form of government against an even greater danger than from Russian nuclear attack—and that is a Communist and Socialist subversion from within.